

ACT 147

S.B. NO. 2671

A Bill for an Act Relating to Veterinary Technicians.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Hawaii:

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that veterinary technicians are essential members of the veterinary health care team, second only to licensed veterinarians, who deliver quality animal care to the community. In public service, veterinary technicians ensure compliance with animal care and control at the University of Hawaii, in the animal industry division of the department of agriculture, in laboratories, and in the rabies quarantine branch of the department of agriculture. Veterinary technicians also assist veterinarians to promote and ensure animal health at the Honolulu zoo, in the shelter and rescue community, in laboratories, and in other veterinary-related establishments. In private practice, supervised by licensed veterinarians, veterinary technicians assist in managing veterinarian practices and veterinary health care teams. Highly-trained veterinary technicians also assist veterinarians in educating the staff and public and provide hands-on quality veterinary medical and surgical services.

The legislature further finds that although students must travel to the continental United States to seek a doctorate of veterinary medicine, Hawaii has a successful veterinary technician program at Windward community college that has been accredited by the American Veterinary Medical Association since 2013. The program enjoys ongoing popularity and outstanding success and its graduates are easily placed in gainful employment.

Currently, Hawaii is the last state to recognize veterinary technicians as bona fide health professionals. Accordingly, the legislature finds that veterinary technicians should be registered by the department of commerce and consumer affairs to ensure the continuing delivery of quality veterinary service to the community and protect animal welfare.

The purpose of this Act is to recognize the important role veterinary technicians play in maintaining the level of care of animals in the State by:

- (1) Beginning July 1, 2018, establishing requirements for the regulation of veterinary technicians and the practice of veterinary technology; and
- (2) Establishing registration requirements and limitations on use of titles for veterinary technicians.

SECTION 2. The Hawaii Revised Statutes is amended by adding a new chapter to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:

**“CHAPTER
VETERINARY TECHNOLOGY PRACTICE**

§ -1 **Definitions.** As used in this chapter:

“Department” means the department of commerce and consumer affairs.

“Intubate” means to pass a tube into the trachea for purposes of anesthesia and airway maintenance.

“Monitor” means to evaluate patient health by tracking vital signs via physical examination and multi-parameter monitors in order to recognize abnormalities while an animal is under anesthesia.

“Practice of veterinary technology” includes but is not limited to the following procedures only under the direct supervision of a licensed veterinarian:

- (1) Monitoring anesthesia;

- (2) Intubating;
- (3) Performing dental cleaning;
- (4) Creating a relief hole in the skin to facilitate placement of an intravenous catheter; and
- (5) Participating in laboratory management activities.

§ -2 Practice of veterinary technology; qualifications; registration required. (a) No person shall represent, announce, or advertise oneself, publicly or privately, as a veterinary technician or registered veterinary technician, or shall append the letters “RVT” or “VT” or affix any other words, letters, abbreviations, or insignia to the person’s name indicating or implying that the person is engaged in the practice of veterinary technology, unless the person:

- (1) Registers the person’s name and business address biennially with the department in a manner prescribed by the department; and
 - (2) Meets the qualifications of section -3.
- (b) The department shall maintain and biennially update a list of the names and business addresses of the veterinary technicians who are registered pursuant to subsection (a).

(c) Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to prohibit a licensed veterinarian from utilizing support or auxiliary personnel to assist in the practice of veterinary medicine; provided that the support or auxiliary personnel shall work under the direct supervision of a licensed veterinarian.

(d) A registration granted under this chapter shall mean that the person has met the requirements, including minimum practice standards, to provide protection to the public and is permitted to use the title of veterinary technician or registered veterinary technician and engage in the practice of veterinary technology.

§ -3 Veterinary technician qualifications. No applicant shall be registered to engage in the practice of veterinary technology unless the applicant:

- (1) Is at least eighteen years of age;
- (2) Has successfully passed the Veterinary Technician National Examination; and
- (3) Meets at least one of the following conditions:
 - (A) Has successfully completed a course of study at a program for veterinary technology accredited by the American Veterinary Medical Association Committee on Veterinary Technician Education and Activities;
 - (B) Is a licensed, certified, or registered veterinary technician in good standing in another state having standards for registration comparable to those in this State; or
 - (C) Prior to July 1, 2021, submits a notarized document from an employer who is a licensed veterinarian and who certifies that the applicant has five years or more of practical experience in Hawaii; provided that no reciprocity shall be given for practical experience gained outside of the State.

Before any applicant shall be eligible for registration under this chapter, the applicant shall file an application in a form as shall be prescribed by the department and pay to the department of commerce and consumer affairs an application fee and all other applicable fees.”

SECTION 3. Upon the issuance of a new registration under section 2 of this Act and at each registration renewal period, each veterinary technician shall pay, in addition to the registration fee or renewal fee, a surcharge of \$50, which

shall be maintained in a separate account within the compliance resolution fund established pursuant to section 26-9(o), Hawaii Revised Statutes. At the end of each quarter, the moneys contained in the separate account established pursuant to this section shall be transferred to the compliance resolution fund until such time that the total transferred amounts equal the amount appropriated in section 4 of this Act. Thereafter, no surcharge shall be assessed, and any funds in excess of the amount appropriated in section 4 of this Act shall be deposited into the compliance resolution fund.

SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the compliance resolution fund established pursuant to section 26-9(o), Hawaii Revised Statutes, the sum of \$30,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2016-2017 to implement the registration of veterinary technicians as required by this Act.

The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of commerce and consumer affairs for the purposes of this Act.

SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2016; provided that section 2 shall take effect on July 1, 2018.

(Approved June 29, 2016.)